

**Middlesex County  
One Stop Operations/ Workfirst Collaborative  
September 26, 2013  
1:30pm**

**County of Middlesex  
Office of Workforce Development  
550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
WIA Conference Room B**

Attendees: Jane Brady, Baden Almonor, Shelia Frazer, MaryAnn Connors, Caroline Ehrlich, Janice Fishbein, Patricia Foster, Carla Ghee, Wanda Johnson, Maria Gonzalez, Sharon Hartman, Adrienne Keaton, Andrew Marcuno, Bobbin Paskell, Miriam Ruiz, John Ross, Timothy Timberlake, Linda Urbach, Sandra Woods, Jean Zwingli

Staff: Helina K. Wisniewski, Secretary

Adrienne Keaton called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the June 27, 2013 One Stop Operations Committee were presented for approval. MaryAnn Connors made a motion for the approval of the minutes of the June 27, 2013 meeting. John Ross seconded and the motion carried.

**UI Issues – Carla Ghee**

Up until the end of last program year, the New Brunswick UI office had two separate areas-- the Front Counter and the Adjudication Center. The Adjudication Center handles claims with issues that claimants may have. The Adjudication Center relocated to Trenton on June 28, 2013. The UI office is now called the One Stop Counter. There are a few staff members at the counter who are in training, but are capable of helping the clients. The traffic has been steady with no less than 100 people per day, but usually more, coming to the UI Front Counter for help.

Due to sequestration, weekly payments were reduced by 22.2 percent beginning in July, 2013. A problem occurred with implementing the reduction because UI claimants normally report on line or by phone every two weeks. At the point that the reduction was supposed to take place it was in the middle of a two week cycle. One week was not subjected to the sequestration and the second week was. When claimants went online or called in their claim, the two weeks together lead the system to reject it, which resulted in the need for manual payments. People were coming in to the One Stop in droves to find out why they had not received their UI, and get the situation corrected.

As of the week ending October 5, 2013, the federal government will be changing the reduction in benefits for those who are on extensions from 22.2 percent to 7.2 percent. The change in the amount of the reduction is not retroactive. Notifications were mailed, emailed, and changed on the website and the phone, advising everyone to claim weekly instead of every two weeks.

### **Literacy/Learning Links/ GED - Jane Brady**

Personnel changes have occurred in the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Learning Links over the summer. Lori Christy was hired as the new Learning Link instructor in New Brunswick, replacing Phyllis Boulanger, of the New Brunswick Board of Education. Margarita Mercado, formerly Business Development Representative in the Business Resource Center at the New Brunswick One Stop transferred to the Perth Amboy Learning Link to become the instructor. Patrick Barry, formerly the Perth Amboy Learning Link instructor, was hired by MCC to work in the WIA Youth Program in Carteret. Lori and Margarita are employees of the Middlesex County Department of Workforce Development.

There were no programmatic changes in the Learning Links. They provide Basic Skills, ESL and Basic Computer Skills training. There are more people at the Perth Amboy Learning Link taking basic computer skills, while in the New Brunswick Learning Link more people take basic skills. Depending on their level of proficiency some of the ESL clients are sent to the New Brunswick BOE and Perth Amboy BOE for classes. There is space available for more people to be served in both Learning Links. There are morning and afternoon sessions. We can serve 24 people every day in both locations.

The TABE Test was installed on six computers in both the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Learning Links.

The State of New Jersey has not decided which test they will approve to use for the Alternative High School Diploma. We are hearing they will approve all three tests-- Pearson, McGraw Hill and ETS. Once the State approves the tests, the GED testing centers at the New Brunswick BOE and Perth Amboy BOE will have to decide which test they will offer to the students. Pierson will charge \$150 per test and will only offer the test on a computer. McGraw Hill and ETS Test will charge \$50 and will have computer and paper/pencil testing.

### **MCC Programs - Mary Ann Connors**

The REA2 workshops are held at Middlesex County College. NJDLWD has indicated the onetime 3 hour workshop is mandatory for UI recipients. They are sent an appointment date and time they must report to MCC by NJDLWD. They are expected to be on time, with only a 15 minute grace period for lateness. People are only allowed to make one request to reschedule an appointment to attend the workshop. There are only a few reasons that NJDLWD will accept as a reason to reschedule the appointment.

MCC is providing free health occupations training that includes free public transportation, books, childcare, uniforms (scrubs) and a medical kit. Available programs under the Northern New Jersey Health Professions Consortium (NNJHPC) grant are Phlebotomy Technician, Medical Assistant, Computerized Medical Office Program, EKG Technician and Pharmacy Technician.

Officials from Washington informed MCC they must recruit additional people for impact studies. A lottery will be conducted. For every three people who apply for training, only two will be selected to participate. However, those not selected for training under this grant will be referred to the One Stop for appropriate services. MCC is very interested in serving TANF clients.

MCC is looking to open a classroom size Certified Nursing Assistant Program. They have identified an instructor and have a curriculum for the program. Hopefully, with the assistance of Jane Brady they will get support from JFK Medical Center in Edison to hold the clinical portion of the training there.

Mechatronics - Opportunity4Jersey (O4J) Grant - This training grant is to provide training opportunities for qualified unemployed workers that lead to employment within the state's pre-identified industry sectors.

The program was originally supposed to start on October 1, 2013, but will not start until January, 2014. The grantee has developed and designed a curriculum that offers a certificate program entitled "Mechatronics Certificate" with 26 Continuing Education Units (CEU'S) awarded by the grantee. There is no formal approval as yet. If anyone has questions regarding this program, please contact Mary Ann Conners at (732)906-4681.

### **Affordable Care Act Information – Jane Brady**

Starting October 1, 2013 the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will be available to apply for and enroll in health coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace at HealthCare.gov. Health coverage will start as early as January 1, 2014, and open enrollment ends on March 31, 2014. The One Stop Career Centers will provide information on health care. We will not advise people regarding the coverage, but simply provide flyers and pamphlets. The State will supply us with three pamphlets they have approved for distribution. Mrs. Brady indicated she would like to open the New Brunswick One Stop Career Center during the month of November, 4 or 5 times after normal business hours for customers to come in and use our computers to enroll in health care. She has asked NJDLWD for their permission to do this and is waiting for their response.

### **Job Fairs – Jane Brady**

The WIB conducted a job fair on September 25, 2013, at the Old Bridge Township Recreation Building, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. There were 38 employers and 402 jobseekers.

Overall, there are more professional people attending the job fairs than two years ago. Evaluation forms are given out to everyone who attends the job fairs before they leave.

A job fair has been scheduled for October 9, 2013 at Rutgers Labor Education Building in New Brunswick, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. There will be 51 employers attending.

### **WorkFirst Update – John Ross/Jean Zwingli**

Program Year 2012 was reviewed.

The TANF Referrals and Enrollments in WFNJ Activities decreased by 10.2% and 7.5% respectively from Program Year 2011. This is a continuation of a trend cited since Program Year 2010. The decrease over two years is 20% and 16% respectively.

The GA Referrals and Enrollments in WFNJ Activities increased by 10.5% and 15.5% respectively from Program Year 2011. This is a continuation of a trend cited since Program Year 2010. The increase over two years is 21% and 73% respectively.

Placements in full time employment (over 30 hours a week) remained essentially the same as the past two Programs Years for the TANF population. While the job market has improved over that period of time, many individuals are hired into positions that are considered part time as the hours of employment fall short of the 30 hour level.

Placements in full time employment for the GA population remained essentially the same as PY 2011 but have increased 51% over a two year span. This is attributed to a higher number of available participants and attendance at programs designed to help individuals locate job opportunities and obtain employment.

The Participation Rate for TANF participants remains low. Efforts are being coordinated by the Board of Social Services, the One Stop case management staff and the contracted vendors to focus on the TANF participants that demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. By using the existing the sanction process more effectively, clients who face possible reduction or termination of services will be addressed on an ongoing basis when their attendance is not satisfactory.

The Mental Health Association of New Jersey through a grant to fund Career Connections has been conducting a series of Workshops in Perth Amboy and New Brunswick for TANF and GA clients. The Tools for Success Program is being received very well both due to its content and the dynamic method of its delivery. The Program has four components presented in four weekly sessions that address: Overcoming Barriers, Decision Making, Transferable Skills, Resources and Supports.

### **Open Discussion/Other Business**

- Tim Timberlake, NBALC - The NBALC received a grant and will be offering ESL classes in each of the six elementary schools in the evening for just one year. It will be available Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.
- Sheila Frazer, Edison Job Corps – There will be an Industry Advisory Council Brunch Meeting on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 from 10am - 12pm at Edison Job Corps, 500 Plainfield Avenue in Edison.
- Andrew Marcuno, PAAS - He is available to help us or any other organization with individuals who need to complete their GED testing. He is in charge of all the drop outs for the Adult School and high school in Perth Amboy.
- Bobbin Paskell, Coming Home of Middlesex County, Inc. - There is a large growth of chronically homeless people in Middlesex County. There are people who have some level of disability and have been homeless for more than a year or have been homeless 4 or more times in the last three years. Over the course of the year, there were over 1,700 people homeless including men, women and children. Most of the homeless people are not disabled. They are employable.

There is a Case Manager's Collaborative meeting every first Friday of the month at 10:00 am at the County Administration Bldg., 75 Bayard Street, 5th Floor, New Brunswick, If anyone is interested in attending. If anyone needs help regarding the homeless, they should call the hotline at 211.

- Mary Ann Connors, MCC - There are low income slots available at the Child Care Center at the campus.
- Sandra Woods, Easter Seals New Jersey - Seniors are available to work and train at different facilities for free and they are paid by Easter Seals.

### **Adjournment**

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2013 at 1:30pm at the One Stop Career Center, 550 Jersey Avenue, WIA Conference Room B. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

**Information/Handout Distributed to Members**

Flyers from Middlesex County College  
Flyer from Edison Job Corps

11/1/13